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HOLINESS



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HOLINESS

BY

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PREFACE.

FOR some years past there has been an earnest movement in different parts of the church in quest of a complete Christian life. The object sought bears a variety of names, as Deeper Christian Life, Higher Christian Life, The Life More Abundant, Sanctification, Holiness, Perfect Love, Christian Perfection, Filled with the Holy Spirit, and other terms. Similar movements have existed in the past, and have always been symptoms of increasing spiritual health and growth in the persons thus interested. To stimulate this movement among us, and to guide into the truth relating to it, and, as a minor consideration, to save from error misguided souls, are the aims of this essay.

In the English Bible there are two families of words—the one of Latin, the other of Saxon origin—to represent the same thought: saint,

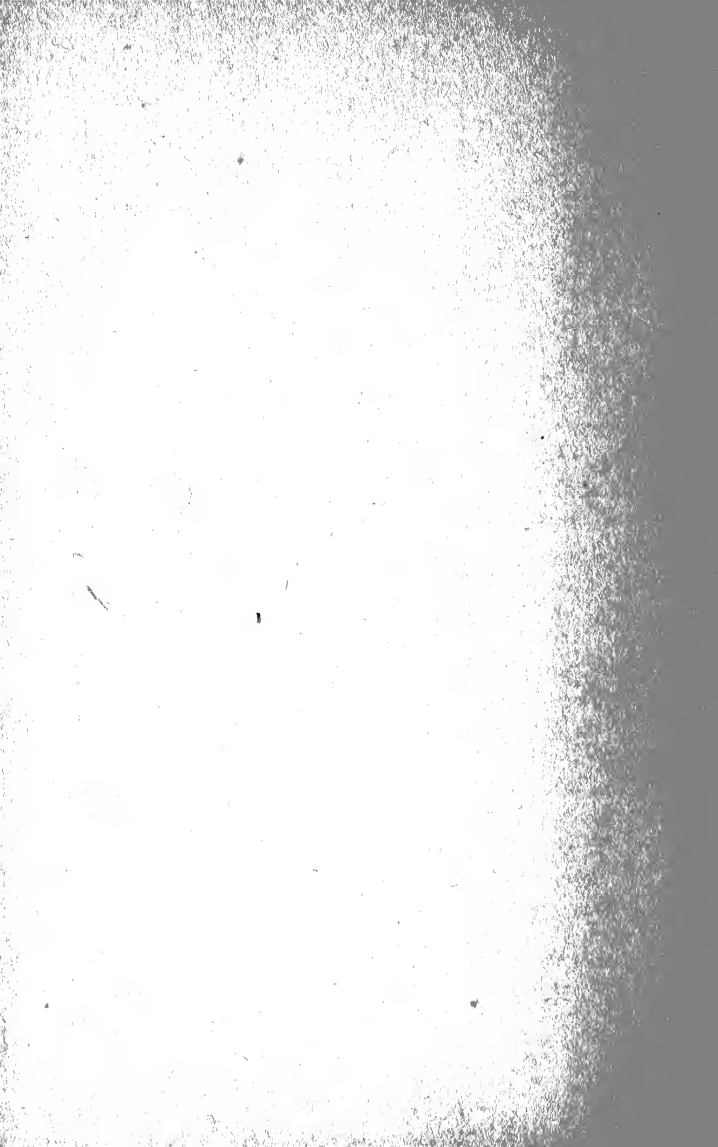
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sanctify, sanctification; holy, hallowed, holiness. In both Testaments the words mean the same, and may be exchanged without error. A saint is a holy person. To sanctify is to make holy. Sanctification is a state of holiness.

The writer is not aware that anything here presented is novel, or contrary to the doctrines of our Church.

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HOLINESS.

I. HOLINESS OF GOD, ANGELS, AND HEAVEN.

1. IN Exodus 15:11, is found the first announcement of God's holiness. After the escape from bondage and the overthrow of the Egyptians and the safe crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites, the people led by Moses sang this song of triumph:

“Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?
Who is like thee, glorious in holiness,
Fearful in praises, doing wonders?
Thou stretchedst out thy right hand,
The earth swallowed them.
Thou in thy mercy hast led the people which
thou has redeemed:
Thou hast guided them in thy strength to thy
holy habitation.”

Jehovah is “glorious in holiness,” “a man of war.” He stretches forth his right hand to smite

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down his enemies and to lead his people into his holy habitation.

In Leviticus this expression occurs a number of times: "Be ye holy, for I am holy." "Ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy." "Ye shall be holy unto me: for I the Lord am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that ye should be mine." This is God's declaration of his own essential nature; his nature or character is holy.

In a vision Isaiah saw the Lord seated on an exalted throne; and he heard the seraphim cry one to another, and say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." The holiness of the Lord was so vividly impressed upon Isaiah, that he uses the term, "the Holy One," half as many times as there are chapters in his writings. The Ninety-ninth Psalm is an earthly echo of this heavenly chorus:

"Let them praise thy great and terrible name:

Holy is he.

Exalt ye the Lord our God,

And worship at his footstool:

Holy is he.

Exalt ye the Lord our God,

And worship at his holy hill:

For the Lord our God is holy."

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What is the meaning of holy, or holiness, as applied to God? Of the meaning of the Old Testament word, Delitzsch says it is "absolutely pure, literally, separated; namely, from impurity, imperfection, sin; holiness is His physical and preëminently ethical faultlessness or perfection." Keil says, "God is called the Holy One because he is altogether pure, the clear and spotless Light, so that in the idea of the holiness of God there are embodied the absolute moral purity and perfection of the divine nature and his unclouded glory." Oehler declares that divine holiness may be defined concretely "as an absolute perfection of life, but essentially in an ethical sense. Many, indeed, have gone further, and declare that the holiness of God designates the whole divine perfection, majesty, and blessedness, 'the whole complex of that of which we, in our human imperfection and shortsightedness, are wont to look at and represent singly in the individual attributes of God.' We may say, with Oetinger, 'Holiness is hidden glory, and glory, disclosed holiness.'"

In the Old Testament, the nature of God is revealed as holiness; in the New Testament, the divine nature is revealed as love. When our

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knowledge is profound enough, we may be able to see that the divine holiness and the divine love are identical. "We sum up our results thus: In the absolute sense, God alone is holy, and his holiness is the ground of the requirement of holiness in his creatures. Holiness is the attribute of God, according to which he wills and does only that which is morally good. In other words, it is the perfect harmony of his will with his perfect ethical nature. But the divine holiness is not to be thought of as a mere passive, quiescent state. It is an active impulse, a forthgoing energy. In God's holiness, that is, in the expression of his perfect ethical nature, his self-revelation is grounded. Nay, creation itself, as well as redemption, would be inconceivable apart from the divine holiness, the energizing of God's absolutely good will.

"By some theologians holiness and love are identified. More commonly, they are sharply distinguished, holiness being regarded as the self-preservative, or retributive attribute of God, and love as his beneficent, self-imparting attribute. To discuss this subject here would carry us too far. It seems clear, at least from our investiga-

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tion, that holiness and love represent closely kindred conceptions, and that there is an inner harmony between them. They are the two words which best express God's moral perfection, and the difference between them seems rather formal than real. At any rate, in their application to men, they seem to express, better than any other words, the highest aim of human life, and the most comprehensive obligation of God's perfect law" (Stevens).

2. The God-man, Jesus Christ, in imitation of the title of God used so frequently by Isaiah, is called the Holy One. The evil spirit possessing the man at Capernaum, in the presence of Jesus, cried, saying, "I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." Peter calls him by the same title, saying : "Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God." In his great address on the day of Pentecost, again Peter calls Christ the Holy One, quoting the psalmist's statement, "Neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption." This prophecy, Peter says, refers to the resurrection of Christ. Again, the same speaker told the Jews that they had "denied the

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Holy and Righteous One, . . . and killed the Prince of life." John, also, uses this name of Christ, saying, "Ye have an anointing from the Holy One." In the letter to the Hebrews, there is given a description of Christ in terms of holiness: "For such a high priest became us, holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people: for this he did once for all, when he offered up himself. For the law appointeth men high priests, having infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was after the law, appointeth a Son, perfected for evermore."

Voluntarily submitting to all the laws and limitations of human nature, the God-man, nevertheless, from the beginning to the end of his earthly manifestation, preserved himself absolutely pure and free from all sin. His own consciousness, uttered on different occasions, bore witness to this purity. He, the meek One, and lowly of heart, assures us that no one can convince him of sin; that he always does those things that are pleasing to the Father; that he has glorified the Father on

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earth, and finished the work which the Father gave him to do. This self-witness is supported by his enemies, who, however gladly they would do so, were not able to adduce the least thing against him. Pilate, Herod, and Judas confess his innocence, and condemn themselves. Even the murderer at his side and the centurion at the cross receive a deep impression of his moral greatness. And further, all his first witnesses, who carefully observed him, and were enlightened by the Holy Spirit, agree in the confession of his perfect sinlessness. But above all other testimony is the witness of the Father to the holiness and perfection of his Son, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The voice of approval from heaven was heard thrice—at the end of his life of seclusion, in the midst of his public career, and at the beginning of his sufferings. The signs which were wrought at his death and his resurrection, and, above these, the resurrection itself, were the seal of divine approval impressed upon his person and his work, for by these was Jesus Christ, though born of the seed of David, according to the flesh, yet "declared to be the Son

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of God with power according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead."

3. The Spirit of God throughout the New Testament is called the Holy Spirit, in intimation of his mission from the Holy Father and the Holy Son, to make holy the earth and its inhabitants. He is the executor of the Godhead, the one who administers the plan of salvation to make holy all who believe in Jesus, and thus save them from their sins. The Spirit of God is called holy, apparently because he has for his crowning office, in addition to his function as immanent deity, the reorganization of the nature of sinful man, fitting him to come into redemptive fellowship with Jesus Christ, the Son, and maintaining in man that susceptibility to the elevating influence of this fellowship which shall secure his full conformity to the image of Christ. The work of salvation is carried on within the realm of our spiritual life, and is therefore a spiritual operation, an operation of spirit upon spirit. Hence, Christ carries on this work by his Spirit—the Holy Spirit. As Christ fulfilled the will and work of the Father upon earth, so does the Holy Spirit administer the will and work of Christ in the hu-

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man soul. What Christ effected in the world of history, the Spirit inwardly appropriates and brings into the inner world of the human spirit. The blessings of redemption, the new life of grace brought near by Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit conveys into the souls of men, and enables them to appropriate. Hence, he forms the bond of communion which unites the souls of men with God and Christ, and binds our hearts in faith and love to our Redeemer. For communion with Christ does not consist in externals, but is an inward relation. It is not forms and formulas, nor certain practices and external ordinances, which make us Christians, but the Spirit of Jesus Christ dwelling in our hearts and ruling in our thoughts and desires. All that is true for us in Christ Jesus is made real in us by the Holy Spirit.

4. The angels in heaven are holy beings. The Saviour calls them holy, "For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of man shall also be ashamed of him, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." The messengers whom Cornelius sent to Peter speak of them as holy: "Cornelius . . . was

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warned of God by a holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words from thee." John, also, uses the expression, "In the presence of the holy angels." They are called, in Job, "sons of God," in God's description of creation:

"When the morning stars sang together,
And all the sons of God shouted for joy."

In this same book they are called holy ones: "And to which of the holy ones wilt thou turn?" Again,

"Behold, he putteth no trust in his holy ones;
Yea, the heavens are not clean in his sight."

The psalmist also calls the angels "sons of God" and "holy ones." From the services they render in the heavenly sanctuary, and from their ministry to the heirs of salvation on earth, their holy nature may also be inferred.

5. Heaven, God's peculiar dwelling-place, is also holy. The psalmist sings:

"Now know I that the Lord saveth his anointed;
He will answer him from his holy heaven
With the saving strength of his right hand."

Through Isaiah God declares: "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose

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name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Referring to Christ's entrance into heaven, the letter to the Hebrews says, "Christ . . . entered in once for all into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption."

From the foregoing, it is seen that God is a holy being, that is, he is perfect in all the attributes of his nature, and in all his relations. "Holiness is a general term for the moral excellence of God. There is none holy as the Lord; no other being absolutely pure and free from all limitations in his moral perfection. Holiness, on the one hand, implies entire freedom from moral evil; and, on the other, absolute moral perfection" (Hodge). God's servants in heaven are all holy; that is, their natures are perfect as angels, and their wills gladly and joyously obey the divine will. Heaven, as God's special dwelling-place, is holy; that is, it is filled with God's glory, made ideally perfect and beautiful. Hence, the perfect harmony of all heavenly things silently expresses the song of the inhabitants of that land, "Holy,

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holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, which was and which is and which is to come."

II. EXTERNAL OR CEREMONIAL HOLINESS.

THE law of progress has been followed in the revelation of the doctrines of the Bible. "That is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual." After thousands of years of God's training, the human mind is still dull in its relation to spiritual truth; but it was much more obtuse in the days of Moses. The long series of object-lessons, and instruction, line upon line, and precept upon precept, were necessary to meet the unspiritual state of the minds of the people. Moses must be interpreted in the light of the letter to the Hebrews. The revelation of holiness is subject to this law of progress.

1. The external holiness of things consists in God's definite claim of ownership of the object, or in some other definite relation to him. Near the burning bush, Moses was told to put off his shoes, for the place where he stood was holy ground; that is, it was the place where God was

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then manifesting himself. The Sabbath day is holy, because it is God's share of man's time, God's day. The tabernacle and its furniture were holy, or most holy, because God specially dwelt in this tent among his people; it was for his special service, and both this fact and his presence in it made it holy. The oil used in the tabernacle, and the clothes of the priests were holy, because used for religious or sacred purposes. Many other things were pronounced holy because of the religious use made of them.

In a similar manner, a distinction was made by Moses between the clean and the unclean animals, and food and clothes and dwelling-houses. Also, a distinction was made between the perfect and the imperfect, especially in the offerings made to God. The animal offered in sacrifice must be perfect, the best of its kind; the anointing oil and the incense used in the tabernacle must be the most precious kinds known; the garments for the priestly service, and the material for the making of the tabernacle and all its furnishing, must be only of the very best. Jerusalem was a holy city, because the holy temple, in which God manifested his presence, was in it. Even the mountains upon

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which the city was built were holy, for the same reason.

2. The external holiness of persons is the claim of God for their special service, attended by some ceremony of purification recognizing this claim. The firstborn was holy, because God claimed it. "Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, . . . among the children of Israel, both man and beast: it is mine." This claim is expressly based upon the Passover. The firstborn, exempt from destruction, became, in a special sense, the exclusive property of the Lord: the firstborn of men as ministers, the firstborn of cattle as victims. In place of the firstborn of men, the Levites were afterward chosen. Aaron and his sons were holy, because God chose them to minister before him as priests. God said: "And the tent shall be sanctified by my glory. And I will sanctify the tent of meeting, and the altar: Aaron also and his sons will I sanctify." In other places, Moses tells us how Aaron and his sons were sanctified—they bathed in water, were anointed with holy oil, were clothed in the holy garments and emblems of office. Thus were they made externally holy. The Hebrew nation was a holy people, because the

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Lord chose them to be a "peculiar people unto himself, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth." They responded to this choice of God, by the rite of circumcision and by other ceremonies.

By these object-lessons, associated with the commandments of God, the people were trained into the habit of making a distinction between the perfect and the imperfect, the clean or pure and the unclean or impure, the holy and the unholy. A vocabulary was also formed by which to express these distinctions, which was finally applied to personal character and life.

In reading the Psalms and the prophets, we frequently catch sight of a deeper meaning of personal holiness than that which we have called external—a holiness of heart and conduct. The great lesson would seem lost, if some had not entered into an experience of this profounder meaning, for the sake of which the whole ceremonial law was instituted. But even in the New Testament, all who have separated themselves from the world by holy baptism, as a profession of faith in Christ, are called saints, holy ones. The term occurs more than half a hundred times as the com-

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mon name for the followers of Christ, the members of the Christian church. Next to the name "brethren," saints, or holy ones, is the most frequent title for a Christian found in the New Testament. The least perfect, as well as the most perfect, alike were given this title. It is equally true to-day that there is a sense in which every one who professes the name of Christ is holy; but this lowest stage of holiness is only the ceremonial or external type of the Hebrews of the days of Moses, and is not up to God's demands in this age.

III. PERSONAL HOLINESS.

SIN, in its essence, is selfishness. Sin, as an act, is a voluntary transgression of a known law. The fundamental fact of sin to-day is unbelief in Jesus Christ. The Word of God, the history of our race, and our individual experience testify that, both in its essence and in its practice, sin is as wide as the human race, and present wherever man is found on earth. "For there is no distinction; for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God."

Now, God's remedy for sin is Jesus Christ.

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“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, by his blood, to shew his righteousness, because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the shewing, I say, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus.” In the court of heaven, because of the merit of Jesus Christ, the penitent believer’s faith is reckoned for righteousness, and his sins are forgiven. This is what is meant by justification; but at the time this legal transaction takes place for us, there is wrought a work in us, by which we pass from death unto life—the new birth is effected, we are born from above, born of God, born of the Spirit, for that which is born of the flesh is flesh, but that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. This change wrought in us is regeneration. Justification changes our standing before God; regeneration changes our moral nature, and plants the seed of a new life in us. It is the beginning of a divine life in us. It is also the commencement of our freedom from sin. Because it is the beginning of a divine life of

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purity and love in us, it is the beginning of holiness in us. Whatever work of grace is wrought in us afterward, it must be the carrying on of this good work which regeneration begins in us, even unto the perfect day. "Regeneration is holiness begun; holiness is regeneration completed."

Without minimizing the beginning of this new life, for it is the germ from which the most perfect life comes forth, it is the babe in Christ which finally comes to the stature of a perfect man in him; yet it is the conviction of almost every Christian that something more is needed to meet the demands of God and the deepest longings of the heart of man. The completion of our nature in Christ is the thing signified by all the types and shadows and commands of the Old Covenant, and is clearly set forth in the New Covenant. Whether we hear Jehovah saying, "Be ye holy, for I am holy," or hear Jesus saying, "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect," or hear the Holy Spirit saying, by the mouth of Paul, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," or, "That ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God," or, "Ye are complete in him," they but refer to dif-

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ferent sides or modes of expressing the one great object for which Jehovah patiently trained the Hebrew nation, and for which Jesus lived, served, died, arose, ascended, and now sits on the right hand of the Father, and for which the Holy Spirit makes human bodies his temple to-day; that is, the holiness of heart and life of God's children. This means:

1. Freedom from sin.
2. Christ living in our hearts.
3. Love ruling in our lives.

1. Freedom from sin. Just what the nature of the sin is which remains after our regeneration, is most difficult to determine. Every regenerated person is, in a degree, holy, and is called a saint. If he should die, his peace is made with God; but his experience is not satisfactory; he longs for a more perfect life, and for a pure heart. The study of God's Word only deepens this desire for more complete purity and deeper peace. The use of figures to convey spiritual truth is not a perfect method, and always liable to be misunderstood, yet we have nothing better. Look at the parable of the sower as an illustration of this work of grace. The seed was perfect, but

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the soil was not in each case in a perfect condition. This difference in the condition of the soil made the difference in the harvest. In the stony-ground hearers the rock was too near the surface. More soil must be imported, as in one of the New York parks, which was made out of a barren bed of rocks, by blasting away some, and burying other parts beneath many loads of soil. Now it is a perfect park of lawn and trees and flowers and fountains. God's grace can certainly do as much for a naturally unpromising nature in man, and bring it, through the seeds of life sown there, into a garden of the Lord, causing the desert to bud and blossom as the rose. The thorny-ground hearers received good seed into ground that was good enough, but for the fact that the roots of the thorns were still in it, alive, ready to spring up and choke out and prevent the growth of the good seed. It, therefore, brought no fruit to perfection. But cannot grace both cut down the thorn bushes and also free the soil from their roots, that the good seed may grow to perfection? The good-ground hearers received the good seed into good ground, ground freed from all competing elements, and, the inference is easy, kept free; there-

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fore, the harvest is perfect, yielding thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold. Regeneration brings the seed of a new life into our hearts, but it does not free our natures from all the depraved elements of the old life of sin. It cuts down the thorn bushes, but requires a sanctifying process to destroy their roots, and make and keep us free from them and from all evil plants and weeds.

Dispositions and tastes are of the nature of habits. Habits often repeated become a second nature, stronger even than the first nature. The old saying runs, "Sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny." This is the process by which character becomes crystallized into permanency, too strong for man to break. May not the law of habit explain, in part at least, what the tendencies to evil are which remain in an unsanctified nature? An old habit, even after its power has been broken, and a new opposing habit is begun, tends to recur under favorable conditions. The old lines along which our evil thoughts, feelings, volitions, and actions moved through body and soul, may be the bonds from whose slavery we cry, "Who shall deliver me from this bondage?" "But thanks be

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to God, which giveth us the victory." "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, we have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life."

This part of the work of sanctification is a negative process, by which the heart is freed or cleansed from sin. John says, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin." Again, "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not." "Sinneth not"; this is, it is not his choice or habit to sin. This is reconciled with the other statement of John, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," by the fact that imperfections and infirmities of body and mind, which we do not choose or approve, will cleave to us while we remain on earth. For these we are not blameworthy. If freedom from sin means to be free from these imperfections and infirmities, we shall not find it this side of the resurrection; but we understand holiness as the cleansing of our hearts from the love of sin, from the habit of sin, and from the choice of sin. The essence of evil is located in the heart,

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down in the profound depth of our being, clear below consciousness. We only realize its presence and power when it manifests itself in some way. The wise man advises to "keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." In this deep fountain, the heart, the Saviour located the things which defile a man. While the holiness of the Mosaic law began on the outside and worked inward, the method of holiness taught by Jesus begins on the inside, in the heart, and works outward. The well from which we get our daily supply of water may have poisonous objects at its bottom, without our knowing it, until we are infected with a deadly disease. The heart of man is so deep it may conceal from our knowledge the deadly poison of sin, until some favorable occasion calls it into action, and overwhelms us with its dire effects. The Saviour's philosophy of life is to clean out the well, and keep it clean, then the water will be pure, sweet, and healthful.

Jesus taught, "If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Man thus becomes the dwelling-place of God; his body is God's temple. Now, in the olden

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times, the place in which God dwelt among men was called the most holy place, the holy of holies; it was made ceremonially holy by the sprinkling of blood before God would make it his dwelling-place, and thus sanctify it in fact. How can this holy God dwell to-day in a life or heart that loves sin? How can he dwell in this house unless it is holy? Surely, the old tabernacle service teaches that we must be cleansed, purified, made free from all sin.

In Romans 6: 6-11, Paul's great argument for freedom from the bondage of sin is set forth: "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; for he that hath died is justified from sin. But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. . . . Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." Reckon this to be true, and do not think it necessary to live in any known sin. The method of this work is through the power of God, by union with Christ. "He was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth through the power of God. For we also are weak

in him, but we shall live with him through the power of God" (II. Cor. 13:4). The "greatness of his power to usward who believe" is "according to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit down at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come." This unmeasured power of God, which raised Christ from the dead, is to usward, to save us from sin, and to fulfill in us the mission of Jesus. He "shall save his people from their sins." Therefore, "make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof," but mortify your members of sin, putting the "old man" to death.

2. The life of Christ in the heart is begun in our regeneration, and is completed in that state of holiness in which his will is done in us as it is done in heaven. The new life is the life of Christ in the soul. Paul tells the Galatians that he was again in "travail until Christ be formed in" them. And Peter tells us, "He hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great prom-

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ises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature.”

William Law says: “Be persuaded fully to believe, and firmly to settle in thy mind this certain truth, that all our salvation consists in the manifestation of the nature, life, and spirit of Jesus Christ, in our inward new man. This alone is Christian redemption; this alone delivers from the guilt and power of sin; this alone redeems, renews, and regains the first life of God in the soul of man. Everything besides this is self, is fiction, is propriety, is own will, and, however colored, is only thy old man, with all his deeds. Enter, therefore, with all thy heart into this truth, let thy eye be always upon it, do everything in view of it, try everything by the truth of it, love nothing but for the sake of it. Wherever thou goest, whatever thou doest, at home or abroad, in the field or at church, do all in a desire of union with Christ, in imitation of his tempers and inclinations, and look upon all as nothing but that which exercises and increases the spirit and life of Christ in thy soul. From morning to night keep Jesus in thy heart. Long for nothing, desire nothing, hope for nothing, but to have all that

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is within thee changed into the spirit and temper of the holy Jesus. Let this be thy Christianity, thy church, and thy religion. For this new birth in Christ thus firmly believed, and continually desired, will do everything that thou wantest to have done in thee; it will dry up all the springs of vice, stop all the workings of evil in thy nature; it will bring all that is good into thee; it will open all the gospel within thee, and thou wilt know what it is to be taught of God. This longing desire of thy heart to be one with Christ will soon put a stop to all the vanity of thy life, and nothing will be admitted to enter into thy heart, or proceed from it, but what comes from God and returns to God; thou wilt soon be, as it were, tied and bound in the chains of all holy affections and desires, thy mouth will have a watch set upon it, thy ears will willingly hear nothing that does not tend to God, nor thy eyes be open but to see and find occasion of doing good. In a word, when this faith has got both thy head and thy heart, it will then be with thee, as it was with the merchant who found a pearl of great price, it will make thee glad to sell all that thou hast and buy it. To have salvation from Christ is nothing else

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but to be made like him; it is to have a Christ within us, an inward Saviour, producing a birth of his own nature, life, and spirit within us."

In John's writings, Christ sets forth this divine life in man under different figures, saying: "I am the bread of life." "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and as I live because of the Father; so he that eateth me, he also shall live because of me." This is explained by a statement in his first letter: "God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath the life."

Again, the parable of the vine and branches is used to illustrate this mystic union. "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for apart from me ye can do nothing. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you." The vine furnished the branches not only with the principle of life, but with the type of life. No pressure or molding from without is needed to shape them to the pattern of the parent stock. Every minutest particular of form and color and taste

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and fragrance is determined by the root, and evolved from it. A true believer, therefore, will ask no better thing of the Lord than that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in his body. Outward imitation, though it be of the perfect Example himself, has little place in the order of spiritual growth; little place because little possibility. "Without me," that is, apart from me, separate from me, "ye can do nothing." To abide in Christ is the only secret of Christlikeness. "Christian progress is growing towards Christ, by growing from him" (Gordon).

Jesus prayed: "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth. As thou didst send me into the world, even so sent I them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth. Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may be all one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us. . . . I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one." Paul constantly repeats his favorite mode of expressing this mystery, "Christ in you," or, "Ye in Christ." Christ is

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thus presented as the principle of the life of believers, so one with all that is most deeply personal in them, that he molds and determines their activities, and reproduces in them what is most deeply personal to himself. Quickened at the center of their being by the very Spirit of God that formed the principle of his personal life, and having Christ thus dwelling in them, believers are enabled to live his life over again; or, rather, they are the agents by and in whom he lives over again his own life, reincarnating himself, as it were, ever anew in the flesh of his people.

The historic life which Christ lived among men, for us, is an allegory of the life he lives in us now. The birth, passion, cross, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, after a spiritual manner, must be transacted in us. That historic life is our justification; this spiritual life in us is our sanctification. Thus our religious experience is daily making real in us what is already true for us in Christ Jesus.

Paul announces, "I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the

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Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me." It was Christ's real life that Paul lived, not any longer his own old sinful life. A similar communion of life now exists between the glorified Christ and the Christian believer. "Christ, in coming forth from God, has not left God; in returning to God, he has not left us." Or, as Paul says, again, "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." The Christian and the Lord are one spirit; and that must necessarily be a holy spirit. What Christ has done for us avails nothing, if he does not really, through faith, live in us. He came that we might have life in more abundance; but that life is in the Son, and he that hath the Son hath this abundant life. If Christ be in us, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. "If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new." We are thus "strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man"; and Christ dwells in our heart through faith; and being grounded in love, we are "strong to apprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the

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love of Christ which passeth knowledge," and are thus filled with all the fullness of God.

The feeblest Christians, who are pressing on to know the Lord, may say, "He that is in us is greater than he that is in the world"; and if they abide in him they shall have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. It is only by the life of Christ in us that the great end of our redemption is attained, even our new creation after the image of the divine perfection, in righteousness and holiness of truth. Because he lives in us, we shall live also, and we shall not be left orphans in this world; and in that day we shall know that he is in the Father, and we in him, and he in us. "Every one that hath this hope set on him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

3. Love rules in the life of the perfect Christian as the highest law known to him. A summary of the law, as given by Moses, and reaffirmed by the Saviour, is this, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." This can be done only when selfishness is suppressed, or destroyed;

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or, rather, as the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, selfishness goes out, banished by the expulsive power of the new affection. Love to God, as an emotion, is a mingling of joy, gladness, delight, and satisfaction in him, and a desire to possess more of him. This emotional phase of love was the characteristic of many of the mediæval saints; a life of luxurious enjoyment, which has little strength of character, and cannot be regarded as the most valuable element in Christian love. Yet it is to be feared that this side of religion has often been made so prominent as to attract only a certain type of mind to the life of holiness and love, and to cultivate that form of selfishness that seeks to enjoy emotional states as an end.

Contemplative love is delight in the divine perfections, and in all that is pure and right and lovely and good in all God's creatures, because all these lovable qualities are from God, an overflow from the divine heart of love. This is similar to love as a mere emotion; but has more of will in it, and is nobler, in that it rejoices in the enjoyment and perfection of others.

Practical love is the highest type of this ele-

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ment, for it is the life of Him who went about doing good embodied in us. It is the spirit of Mary, who sat at the Saviour's feet adoringly, and joyfully contemplating his gracious words; and the spirit of Martha, who was troubled about much serving, both merged into one—Mary's restfulness taking the place of Martha's fretfulness, and Martha's spirit of service taking the place of Mary's luxurious ease. It is not an earth-born spirit, but was inspired by him who first loved us. It does not decline the rapturous delight coming from communion with God; but it makes this emotion a motive to a more loyal and loving service rendered to God and our fellow-men.

This love is shown in our esteem for God's ordinances and means of grace. "For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments." "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." No one can lightly esteem the house of God, the house of prayer, the communion of saints, the holy ordinances, or the divine Word, in whom the love of God dwells; but he earnestly makes all these means of grace channels through which the life of God flows into his soul. Thus love constantly appropriates more

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and more of the divine life; even "as the hart panteth after the water brooks," so the soul panteth after God, ever drinking, never satisfied, life ever increasing—all that we may only be better servants.

"Perfect love casteth out fear" in our relation to God; but it "hides a multitude of sins," and "is the bond of perfectness" in our relations to men. The life of Jesus is its perfect illustration, for his whole life was ruled by love. Paul teaches us that to possess the mind or spirit of Christ is to be a true Christian. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Again, "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." This means to love our enemies, and pray for them that persecute us; then we shall be the sons of our Father in heaven, "for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." Love to our enemy means to choose his welfare; to do him what good we can; if he hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink, thus overcoming evil with good. "Ye therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Love is sympathetic and tender to all; it weeps

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with those who weep, and rejoices with those who rejoice; in love of the brethren, it is tenderly affectioned one to another, in honor preferring one another. "Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye: and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness." Love is practical. It bears one another's burdens, and so fulfills the law of Christ. It obeys the great rule of the Master, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them." Love sees in every man a neighbor and a brother, and acts the good Samaritan toward him. After the example of Jesus Christ, it seeks not to be served, but to be a servant, and give its life a ransom for the many. It is Paul's rapturous song of love, clothed with flesh and blood, that makes the perfect Christian. "Love suffereth long and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil;

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rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth."

This is a picture of Jesus, and of his followers, in whom love is patience and kindness; the absence of envy; the presence of humility; not easily provoked; does not impugn motives; mourns over iniquity, and rejoices in the truth; endures wrong; believes the best; where it cannot believe, hopes; where it cannot even hope, suffers; it is imperishable. Prophecies shall be done away, tongues shall cease, and knowledge shall fail, but love never fails; and in the immortal trio of Christian graces, faith, hope, and love, the greatest is love.

Love of this type is no longer a mere delightful meditation, a rapt contemplation of its object, nor is it merely a highly emotional state of enjoyment; but it is an act and quality of will more important than any emotional state. It is choosing to obey God, and devote the life, moment by moment, to his service. It is cheerful obedience to God in the family, in the church, in the state, in the school, in the social circle, in eco-

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conomic relations, and in international brotherhood. In every right relation in this world, in every needful employment of life, whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, if it is done in the spirit of love, it is to the glory of God, and is the service of a holy life. Out in the field of daily toil is where the Christlife in us bears its golden fruitage. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." By such fruit-bearing we show forth the life of Christ in our mortal bodies; we are thus tongues and hands and feet for the use of our Master. A single generation of this type of Christians would transform this whole earth, and make it again the garden of the Lord. There are enough such now living to show that the life of love is not only God's ideal, but man's privilege.

John's view of love is very practical: "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him?" Again, "God is love; and he that

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abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him. Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as he is, even so are we in this world." As men realize the meaning of John's doctrine, Christian life will become more courageous and heroic in destroying the evils that oppress mankind, and in building up the kingdom of God upon this earth. God is love, but he is a consuming fire, also. This fiery element in love is righteousness, the quality of the old Hebrew prophets, and that which is most needed in our religion to-day; a sharing of God's hatred of evil and of all imperfection, and delight in holiness, until "holiness to the Lord" is graven on our foreheads, on the bells of the horses, and on everything a Christian controls.

He is the most perfect Christian to-day whose love for God and man moves him to give himself in sacrificial service to rescue men from the evils now afflicting our race. It was after this fashion that Jesus pictured the judgment scene in Matthew 25:31-46: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, and ministering to

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those in prison—all loving service rendered to needy men is holy devotion to Jesus Christ.

IV. HOLINESS AND TEMPERAMENT.

THAT holiness is attainable in this life is the doctrine of the Scriptures. God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is a holy being; the angels are holy; heaven is holy. Now, without holiness no one shall see the Lord; only “the pure in heart shall see God.” No one, without holiness, can dwell in heaven, where all is holiness and love. Adaptation to environment is the condition of life. Hence, the command is, “Like as he which called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy.” We learn the same fact when we inquire into the object for which Christ came to earth: “And you, being in time past alienated and enemies in your mind in your evil works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unreprouable before him.” Paul declares it is his aim to “present every man perfect in Christ”; and further de-

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clares that believers are complete in Christ. Concerning the church, the object of Christ is stated thus, "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Again, of the church it is said, "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession." As John saw the redeemed host in heaven, they are described as "they which come out of great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." This also agrees with another statement by the same writer, "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

The prayers of Paul for the people of God are further evidence that Christian perfection or holiness is a state attainable in this life. "Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of the eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make

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you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ." Again: "The God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." Therefore, we are "confident of this very thing, that he which began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ."

That a man's conversion to God will manifest itself according to the natural disposition and temperament of the man is a matter of common observation. The natural man is the mold that determines the shape of the new man. As when a piece of wood is petrified, turned into stone, the stone takes the shape, color, and appearance of the wood, so when the man is made holy, the former man, even his sinless defects, habits, tastes, temperament, determine the peculiarities of the manifestation of the new life in holiness. The trees in the forest, the flowers in the garden, the birds of the air, the fish of the sea, and the beasts of the earth, as well as man, are made of an infinite variety. The rose is very beautiful, but it

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is not the type for the lily or the pansy; the dove is lovely, but it is not the type for the swallow or the eagle; the oak is majestic, but it is not the type for the hickory or the cedar. This variety is as great in human life and experience as in the other works of God. No human being should be regarded as a model for all other persons. Neither should the religious experience of any one man or woman be regarded in all its features as a type that all others must be like. Christ is the only perfect type; and all the good qualities of the whole church, made into one man, are only sufficient to be the earthly representative of him. The endless variety of nationality, culture, temperament, habit, age, sex, and vocation leads to a similar variety in religious experience. Day and night, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, have their counterpart in every sanctified human life.

The church has often esteemed and cultivated a saintly type of character that was more feminine than masculine. Perhaps this is one reason why there are so many more women than men in our churches to-day. In this matter of holiness, it is often found that some man or woman of this pe-

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culiar type of emotion and expression is made an example for all others; but God no more sanctions this among men than among birds or beasts, flowers or trees. The difference among the apostles ought to teach us that God loves variety. The thoughtful Thomas, the practical James, the hopeful Peter, the faithful Paul, and the loving John were holy men, and each acceptable to the Lord.

It is an untold and useless agony of soul to try to have some other person's experience. It is a great loss to the church to hold a theory of holiness that does not include the man of thoughtfulness as well as the one of emotion; the man of will as well as the one of heart. And further, the child and the youth should not be expected to lay aside the innocent qualities of their age, and assume the sober face and wise demeanor of the experienced man of many years.

Holiness aims to bring to the best possible for him the peculiar qualities of each person. While all the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit are in the church, as the body of Christ, yet they are distributed to each one as the Spirit wills. We have yet to learn that God loves the infinite variety of taste, talent, and temperament, and that each may

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be holy, perfect of its kind in fellowship with him. As the diamond may be perfect in its flashing brilliancy, and the rose in its color and fragrance, and the lily in its beauty, and the field in its harvest, and the orchard in its ripe fruit; so every person must be judged, and must judge himself, not by comparison with others, but as an original being. If he is free from all known sin, and if Christ dwells in his heart by faith, and if love rules in his life, he is a holy being, however much he may differ from others in talents, gifts, graces, culture, knowledge, emotional experience, or physical strength.

The one emotional state that all may attain is peace, or heart-rest. The great invitation of the Saviour is, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." This rest is reached when, through the merit of the cross of Christ, ministered to us by the power of the Holy Spirit, we have "crucified the flesh with the passions and the lusts thereof." Then our body is subordinate to our soul, and our soul is ruled by our spirit, and

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our spirit is controlled by the Holy Spirit. All the parts of our nature are then in right relation to each other, and the whole man in right relation to God. Then the Saviour's precept to have no anxiety for food, clothing, shelter, or the evil of to-morrow is realized; and Paul's beautiful statement is found true for us: "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus." "We which have believed do enter into that rest," according to the legacy of Jesus: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." As surely as the Master stilled the winds and the waves, and calmed the troubled waters of the lake, he can command the tempest of human passion, and the unrest of the human heart, even as in the little child "whom his mother comforteth."

True, this does not mean to release us from all suffering, as in some cases suffering is God's chosen means to perfect his work of grace in us.

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Paul seemed to so regard suffering, when he prayed to know Christ in the "fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death"; and when he rejoiced in his sufferings for the church's sake, and aimed to fill up on his part that which was lacking of the afflictions of Christ. He taught that if we suffer with Christ, we shall also be glorified with him. "Wherefore we faint not; but though our outward man is decaying, yet our inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." The letter to the Hebrews teaches the same truth, saying: Our earthly parents chastened us as seemed good to them, but our heavenly Father for our profit, "that we may be partakers of his holiness. All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous, but grievous: yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruits of righteousness." "These are they which come up out of great tribulation." Tribulation is this: to be laid down with your face to the ground and the harrow dragged over

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your back, as the farmer harrows in the seed, in order to secure the harvest.

Whoever suffers as a righteous man, let him do it with the assurance that no soul is in the furnace without one by his side like the Son of God, who shall bring him out purer than gold; whoever is in the flood of great afflictions, let him remember the promise, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee."

Is holiness an instantaneous work, or is it a growth? In that element which consists in being made free from sin, it may be as instantaneous as is the regeneration of the soul; but in every case a process leads up to the moment when God, the Holy Spirit speaks the word of freedom, and we are set free. This is the case with those whose progress goes forward by leaps and bounds. With others, the progress is slow and gradual. Regeneration broke the fever, and their sanctification is a slow convalescence up to perfect health. It is more vital to know that the soul is now in perfect health than to know just when we attained it.

The second part of holiness, the divine life in the soul, is subject to the law of growth. "The

earth beareth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." The new divine life born in us in our regeneration is the same life that is perfected in our sanctification. As we learn to know ourselves more fully, and surrender more of our nature to be possessed by the Holy Spirit, our sanctification extends. It is a question of the Spirit having more and more of us, into which he may come and occupy, as the air fills a vacuum. From the condition of the babe, we attain "unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." The method of God throughout the realm of nature is to give the seed of life, then grow the plant up to its perfection. This seems to be his method in the realm of spiritual things, where he fashions his most perfect work, made in his own image, having the power of an endless life. The possibilities in the new life are so vast, its usual method of reaching its perfection is by a process of growth, or addition, throughout the period of this earth-life. Peter has a statement to this effect: "Whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the di-

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vine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust. Yea, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply virtue; and in your virtue knowledge; and in your knowledge temperance; and in your temperance patience; and in your patience godliness; and in your godliness love of the brethren; and in your love of the brethren love.” This is a process of adding grace to grace, and strength to strength, to which we are to give all diligence.

The third element of holiness, love ruling in our lives, it would seem, is also a process of growth. The love of God shed abroad in our hearts is to be the royal law of liberty in our lives. This is Christ’s idea of his holy religion: It is to make men like God—to think as God thinks, that is, to love God with all the mind; to will as God wills, that is, to love God with all the heart; to do what God commands, that is, to love God with all the strength. The Christ-life in us is the new character; love ruling in our lives is the new conduct. The conduct depends on the character. Both grow together as life processes.

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When perfected, the character and conduct will be Christlike.

There are two extreme views as to the time when God sanctifies the soul: one regards it as a "second work" completed in an instant some time after regeneration; the other regards it as a growth from the time of regeneration down to the hour of death. Both have part of the truth. Holiness as purity, freedom from all known sin, may be wrought in a person by the power of the Holy Ghost, any time after his regeneration that his knowledge and faith grasp the coveted prize. But the other two elements of holiness, the Christ-life in us, and love ruling the whole life, seem normally to require a process of growth to come into the condition of a perfect man in Christ Jesus.

One of the most common fallacies with the "second-work" advocates is the supposed distinction between "growing in grace" and "growing into grace." Assuming that the grace of holiness is entirely different from the grace of regeneration, they say that the former can be grown in, but never grown into. The best answer to this view is given by Bishop Merrill: "Every accession of

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spiritual energy advances the divine life and indicates in the soul greater conformity to the law of love. In this sense, there is growth in grace and into grace, and growth in holiness and into higher degrees of holiness. . . . A building grows as it advances toward completion. A city grows as it increases in population. A man grows in knowledge as he accumulates information; he grows in wealth as he increases his possessions. The house grows into a state nearer the ideal of its builder. The city grows into greater power and greater influence, and the man grows into additional knowledge and into larger wealth. In this sense, the Christian who advances in knowledge, wisdom, and purity, grows into purity as well as in purity. The babe in Christ is in Christ, and therefore in grace, and if he abide in Christ and increase in knowledge and strength, he grows in grace and into grace; and if with his steadfastness and increase of grace he becomes more and more holy, there is not the least impropriety in saying that he grows in holiness and into holiness, into a higher state and degree of holiness. Thus it appears that the use intended to be made of the distinction between growing 'in' and 'into'

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is a profitless play on words without doctrinal significance, for it cannot be that continued and persistent growth in holiness will forever fail of reaching the standard fixed by the apostle for growing believers, 'perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' "

On the other hand, those who deny the possibility of freedom from sin in this life, have in mind more than freedom from all known sin. They usually mean to affirm the impossibility of escaping from the involuntary imperfections and infirmities of human nature in this life. We agree with them in this matter; but this is not the meaning of sin as used by those who advocate freedom from it. "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein? . . . Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." As soon as we become conscious of any sin in us, we may apply to him who "is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him," and be washed and made clean.

Ought we to profess holiness before men? Yes, on suitable occasions, if we have it. It will be

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safe to do so as often, at least, as the disciples told of their glorious vision on the holy mountain, at the transfiguration scene; or as often as Paul wrote of his third-heaven experience; but it is never wise for any one to make his experience in holiness the standard by which to measure any other Christian. Peter, James, and John, though more highly favored, never professed to be better than the other apostles. Neither is it wise for us to seek just such an experience as we have heard some other person narrate.

This doctrine should not be made one of despair to all Christians who have not consciously attained to such an experience. "The truly regenerate are saved, and in the maintenance of a truly regenerate life must be finally saved." They are now in Christ, the sons of God, and, in a degree, holy, for the Word of God calls them "holy ones"; but let them be encouraged to go on unto perfection.

V. WESLEY ON CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

MR. WESLEY wrote the following description of a perfect life:

"What is Christian perfection?

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“The loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. This implies that no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul; and that all the thoughts, words, and actions are governed by pure love.

“Do you affirm that this perfection excludes all infirmities, ignorance, and mistakes?

“I continually affirm quite the contrary, and always have done so.

“But how can every thought, word, and work be governed by pure love, and the man be subject at the same time to ignorance and mistake?

“I see no contradiction here. ‘A man may be filled with pure love, and still be liable to mistake.’ Indeed, I do not expect to be freed from actual mistakes till this mortal puts on immortality. But we may carry this through further yet. A mistake in judgment may possibly occasion a mistake in practice. For instance: Mr. De Renty’s mistake touching the nature of mortification, arising from prejudice of education, occasioned that practical mistake—his wearing an iron girdle. And a thousand such instances there may be, even in those who are in the highest state of grace. Yet where every word and action

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spring from love, such a mistake is not properly sin. However, it cannot bear the rigor of God's justice, but needs the atoning blood.

"What was the judgment of all our brethren who met at Bristol, in 1758, on this head?

"It was expressed in these words: 1. Every man may mistake as long as he lives. 2. A mistake in opinion may occasion a mistake in practice. 3. Every such mistake is a transgression of the perfect law. Therefore, 4. Every such mistake, were it not for the blood of atonement, would expose to eternal damnation. 5. It follows that the most perfect have continual need of the merits of Christ, even for their actual transgressions, and may say for themselves, as well as for their brethren, 'Forgive us our trespasses.' This easily accounts for what might otherwise seem to be utterly unaccountable; namely, that those who are not offended when we speak of the highest degree of love, yet will not hear of living without sin. The reason is, they know all men are liable to mistake, and that in practice as well as in judgment; but they do not know, or do not observe, that this is not sin, if love is the soul-principle of action.

“But still, if they live without sin, does not this exclude the necessity of a mediator? At least, is it not plain that they stand no longer in need of Christ in his priestly office?

“Far from it. None feel their need of Christ like these. None so entirely depend upon him. For Christ does not give life to the soul separate from, but in and with himself. Hence, his words are equally true of all men, in whatsoever state of grace they are, ‘As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me: without [or separate from] me ye can do nothing.’ 1. Not only sin, properly so called, (that is, a voluntary transgression of a known law,) but sin, improperly so called, (that is, an involuntary transgression of a divine law, known or unknown,) needs the atoning blood. 2. I believe there is no such perfection in this life as excludes those involuntary transgressions, which I apprehend to be naturally consequent on the ignorance and mistakes inseparable from mortality. 3. Therefore, *sinless perfection* is a phrase I never use, lest I should seem to contradict myself. 4. I believe a person filled with the love of God is still liable to these involuntary

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transgressions. 5. Such transgressions you may call sin, if you please; I do not for the reasons above mentioned."

In another place, Mr. Wesley wrote:

"1. By perfection, I mean the humble, gentle, patient love of God and our neighbor, ruling our tempers, words, and actions.

"2. As to the manner, I believe this perfection is always wrought in the soul by a simple act of faith, consequently in an instant; but I believe in a gradual work, both preceding and following that instant.

"3. As to the time, I believe this instant generally is the instant of death, the moment the soul leaves the body; but I believe it may be ten, twenty, or forty years before. I believe it is usually many years after justification; but that it may be within five years or five months after it, I know no conclusive argument to the contrary."

VI. A METHOD SUGGESTED.

1. A clearly defined aim.

It is the part of God to fill the regenerate, believing soul with the Holy Spirit as the only source of purity and love. He is also more will-

ing to do this than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children. Every believer is baptized with the Holy Spirit as the means of his regeneration. The multitude which came together on the day of Pentecost, after hearing Peter's sermon, asked what they should do. Peter answered, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." There is every reason to believe that the three thousand who believed, and were baptized that day, were baptized by the Holy Ghost. This scene was repeated at Cæsarea, in the house of the Roman centurion, Cornelius. "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." These Gentiles were all baptized with the Holy Ghost as soon as they believed. When Paul came to Ephesus, he found certain disciples, of whom he inquired, (as the Revised Version reads,) "Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?" The inquiry, and the

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events following, show that Paul regarded the baptism of the Holy Ghost as soon as one believes, as the normal method of salvation. The other parts of the Word of God agree with this interpretation.

The filling of the Holy Ghost is for power and sanctification. "One baptism, but many fillings." The Holy Spirit is in every believer, and fills him, as conscious need arises to move the soul to make room for him. One of the greatest errors of Christians to-day is their lack of faith in the Holy Spirit who is in them. A man moved into a new home. The owner who preceded him believed that the well was without water. The result was, the well remained unused, and the family obtained water from one of the neighboring wells. But the new owner determined to give the well a chance, and so had a large quantity of sand taken out of it, a new pump put in, and a platform put down. The result was, an abundance of excellent water. If we make room for the Holy Spirit, as the means by which we are joined to the Lord, he will fill us to the utmost limit of our being, working in us to will and to do of God's good pleasure.

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It is ours to receive (1) purity, or freedom from all known sin. The love of sin and the habit of sinning are destroyed, and we no longer consent to have sin in any degree or form in us. The involuntary infirmities of human nature are still ours, so that we must "buffet the body, and bring it into bondage." Purity is both a gift and an acquirement, an attitude and an attainment. What we do in purifying ourselves is attributed to God; but still our coöperation is necessary while he works in us to will and to work for his good pleasure. In this, as in every other good thing, we are working together with God. We may say that all the imperfections are ours; all the good in us is of God.

(2) To progress or grow in that divine nature or heredity from the second Adam, which we received in our regeneration. This hidden man of the heart is to grow in all the elements of a Christ-like character from the condition of a babe up to a perfect man. The fruitage of this inner growth is to be perfected in a life of loving fellowship with, and service for God and man.

2. The means which all can use for these attainments are:

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(1) The reading of the Word of God. It is able to make wise unto eternal life, through faith in the Lord Jesus. The Saviour prayed, "Sanctify them in the truth: thy word is truth." The Word of God hidden in the heart is a mighty motive to a holy life. And another value of such Bible study is the fellowship we therein have with the holy prophets and apostles; but, above these, is the fellowship enjoyed with the Saviour of us all.

(2) Meditation on God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and on the great themes of salvation. If we would be holy, we must keep the holy God and his holy law in our thoughts. Paul evidently believed there is a relation between the themes on which we meditate and the life we live, for he exhorted the Philippians, saying, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

(3) Prayer, not only as making request unto God, but especially as fellowship with him in lov-

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ing adoration, is taught us in the example of Jesus, and in that of all holy men and women of all ages. To secure time for prayer and meditation, Moses was in the wilderness for forty years; Elijah was sent into the same wilderness to recover his lapsed faith; Jesus was forty days in the wilderness, and often in retirement for prayer; John the Baptist spent much of his life in the same manner; and Paul, after his conversion and call to preach, spent three years in the Arabian wilderness, in such spiritual exercises as made the gospel to him a personal message and revelation from God.

The examples of these holy men teach the vast importance of taking time to be holy. In our rushing age, it requires a special effort to find time to study the Word of God, to meditate, and to pray. The nearest method to the "wilderness" for being alone with God is the "morning watch," in which those who keep it spend a half-hour each morning in reading the Word, in prayer, and in meditation. This time taken from the hours of slumber or labor is well spent in an exercise which creates a right habit and makes holy all the day and its duties. It goes without saying, that the

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one seeking to please God will spend the Sabbath day in spiritual exercises.

(4) But it must never be forgotten that the place where Jesus lived and illustrated the power of a holy life was in the field of toil. Even the transfiguration glory was revealed but once, for part of a night. Then, to teach us that there are other things more holy in the sight of God, he goes down to the place where men toil and suffer, and relieves the one oppressed by the devil. To live for others, this is the sacrifice and service well pleasing to God. This is a surer way to attain to the highest life possible on earth, than to flee away from the sin and sorrow of the multitude, and seek rest in the cave, or cell.

The one who is living in fellowship with God, through his Word and works, by meditation and prayer, and who opens wide his nature to the Holy Spirit, and, in faith, humbly imitates the sacrificial life of love of our great Example,—the one to whom to live is Christ,—he has the surest pledge that he shall finally be in the glorious image of his Lord, forever satisfied. There is health in such living, and health is happiness—more, such health is holiness.

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